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SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [KWMN](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [PHUM](#)  
SUBJECT: NOMINATION FOR 2009 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE  
AWARD

REF: SECSTATE 111471

¶1. (SBU) Full Name: Ilknur Ustun  
Job Titles/ Associations: President of KA-DER Ankara Branch,  
Turkey Coordinator for the European Women Lobby, and General  
Coordinator for Women Coalition  
Date of Birth: May 18, 1965  
Country of Birth: Turkey  
Citizenship: Turkish  
Address: Bulten Sokak 51/25 Kavaklidere, Ankara  
Phone Number: 90-542-681-12-22  
E-mail: ilk 3@yahoo.com  
Passport Number: TR-L 916151  
Languages: Turkish

¶2. (U) Embassy Ankara would like to nominate Ilknur Ustun,  
President of the Association to Support and Educate Female  
Candidates (KA-DER) Ankara Branch, Turkey Coordinator for the  
European Lobby, and General Coordinator for the Woman  
Coalition for the Secretary's International Women of Courage  
award. Ms. Ustun has been actively working on women's issues  
for 20 years and she has been the president of KA-DER's  
Ankara branch for the past six years. She has displayed  
outstanding courage through her efforts to eliminate  
discrimination against women in every walk of life, with a  
specific focus on increasing women's participation in  
politics.

¶3. (U) As an activist, one of Ms. Ustun's main areas of  
success is her ability to bring together Turkish women from  
different segments of society such as Kurdish women, women  
with headscarves, secular women, and feminists to work as a  
team and to overcome some of the traditional differences in  
Turkish society. Her contributions to the feminist movement  
have resulted in significant gains for women and paved the  
way for enactment of Civil Code reforms. The new code  
establishes provisions for the equal division of property,  
sets 18 as the legal minimum age of marriage for both women  
and men, gives the same inheritance rights to children born  
outside marriage as those born to married parents, and allows  
single parents to adopt children.

¶4. (U) Ms. Ustun has been trying to eliminate the  
"glass-ceiling" for women in politics and to sensitize local  
administrations, governments, and political parties with  
regard to gender issues in society. Ms. Ustun has  
successfully lobbied for the establishment of equality  
committees at all levels of government. As a result of her  
relentless efforts, she contributed to the establishment of  
the parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men  
and Women in March 2009. In addition to this, as a member of  
the European Women Lobby (an umbrella organization formed by  
2000 women NGOs from EU and candidate countries), she  
launched and coordinated campaigns to increase female  
participation in local elections, such as the "50/50  
equality" and "parity" campaigns. Because of her gender  
mainstreaming work, seven women became candidates for village

headman-ship (muhtar) in the March 2009 local elections. This was an impressive accomplishment in the face of overwhelming numerical male domination of local Turkish politics.

¶5. (U) Ms. Ustun has faced both open and veiled threats while working on women's issues. When the GOT wanted to regulate the issue of adultery in the Turkish Penal Code amendments, Ms. Ustun led female members of NGOs to launch a protest campaign. One of the acts of protest was to march to the Turkish parliament with over 1,000 women assembled from all over Turkey. After this event, a fundamentalist newspaper, Vakit, labeled Ms. Ustun as a "dishonorable" woman on its front page and by doing so, Ms. Ustun believes that the newspaper made her as a target for assassination. As an indirect threat and form of harassment, state officials occasionally ask her details of her identification information due to her activism in the southeast.

¶6. (U) Embassy Ankara is nominating Ilknur Ustun for the 2009 International Women of Courage award. Please direct your questions to Political officer Rudney Hunter at hunterrm@state.gov.

JEFFREY

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